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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 HA-06 SVC-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-07 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-07 SPRS-02 /101 W
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P 192031Z NOV 80
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7546

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full

(☒) Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 9097

EO 12065: GDS 11/19/86 (SHLAUDEMAN, HARRY W.) OR-M

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: MOTHERS OF PLAZA DE MAYO AND THE DISAPPEARED

REF: BUENOS AIRES 9074

1. [REDACTED]-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. FOUR MOTHERS OF DISAPPEARED YOUNGSTERS, ACCOMPANIED BY A FATHER (#) THE VISIT WAS TO INQUIRE ABOUT FUTURE U.S. POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO SEEK REASSURANCE AS TO THE EMBASSY'S CONTINUING INTEREST. I TOLD THE GROUP THAT I COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION BUT WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS. AS FOR THE EMBASSY, I SAID THAT WE SHALL MAINTAIN OUR INTEREST AND OUR CONCERN.

3. AT MY REQUEST THE WOMEN (AND THE MAN) RECOUNTED SOME OF THEIR OWN STORIES. (ALL OF THE CASES INVOLVED HERE ARE WELL DOCUMENTED.) WITHIN THE GROUP THERE SEEMED TO BE SOMETHING OF A DIVISION ON THE CRITICAL QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT HOPE REMAINS THAT ANY OF THESE MISSING YOUNG PEOPLE COULD SURFACE AGAIN ALIVE. TWO OF THE WOMEN EXPRESSED WHAT SOUNDED LIKE GENUINE CONVICTION THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF PRISONERS ARE BEING

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HELD IN CLANDESTINE DETENTION CENTERS AND THAT THEIR MISSING RELATIVES MAY WELL BE AMONG THEM. THEY

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REFERRED IN THAT RESPECT TO RUMORS AND PURPORTED STATEMENTS BY LOW-LEVEL FUNCTIONARIES OF THE SECURITY SERVICES. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP SEEMED MORE SKEPTICAL, HOWEVER, AND ONE MOTHER SAID FLATLY THAT THE DISAPPEARED ARE GONE FOR GOOD. THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER AND I NOTED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD NO NEW INFORMATION EITHER WAY. WE REITERATED OUR SYMPATHY AND CONCERN. THE MOTHERS INDICATED THAT THEY PLANNED TO WRITE A LETTER ON THE ISSUE TO OUR PRESIDENT-ELECT.

4. COMMENT: THOSE WHO ENCOURAGE THE MOTHERS AND OTHER RELATIVES OF THE MISSING IN THEIR DESPERATE HOPES CAN BE FAULTED FOR CRUELTY. BUT CLEARLY THE PERSISTENCE OF THE MOTHERS AND OTHERS IN CALLING FOR AN ACCOUNTING HAS A SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON THE MILITARY. STATEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE BY GENERAL VAQUERO (REFTEL) AND THE GOA'S CURRENT MANUEVERS IN THE OASGA STRIKE ME AS SIGNS OF CONSIDERABLE STRAIN AND EVEN FEAR WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE HOW THE KIND OF REAL POLITICAL OPENING SOME ARGENTINES FORESEE UNDER GENERAL VIOLA COULD TAKE PLACE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. THE THEORY APPARENTLY IS THAT THE BOOK ON THE "DIRTY WAR" CAN BE KEPT CLOSED. BUT I DOUBT THE FEASIBILITY OF THAT IN ANYTHING APPROACHING AN ATMOSPHERE OF FREE POLITICAL GIVE-AND-TAKE. BUT THERE WILL EVIDENTLY STILL BE THOSE ON THE SCENE DETERMINED TO REOPEN THAT BOOK.
SHLAUDEMAN

NOTE BY OC/T: (#)OMISSION PARA 2. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.
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